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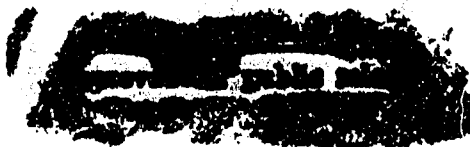
A RAND NOTE

Security Efforts in the Arab World:
A Brief Examination of Four
Regional Organizations

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Joseph A. Kechichian

Prepared for the
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PREFACE

To meet the sponsor's request for an assessment of past Arab security efforts, this Note was originally written in 1991 as a quick response policy-oriented paper, under the title *Improving Middle East Security: An Historical Perspective.* It was re-drafted a year later to place the historical record in perspective as well as to assess security proposals under discussion in the region.

The War for Kuwait amply demonstrated the inherent instabilities of the Middle East in general and the Persian Gulf region in particular. In the aftermath of the war, conservative Arab Gulf monarchies embarked on yet another search for regional security, aimed to deter potential aggressors and defend over 50 percent of the world's known petroleum reserves. How this security objective was structured was one of the most complicated issues facing the Gulf states as well as their regional and global allies.

This Note offers a brief examination of four regional organizations' security efforts in and around the Persian Gulf, and evaluates their historical records, to identify key weaknesses hampering efforts to improve security throughout the area. By examining such diverse groups as the Arab League, the Central Treaty Organization, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the Arab Cooperation Council, an attempt is made to highlight their successes and shortcomings. Toward that end, security linkages between regional powers are evaluated to draw applicable conclusions, if possible. The record clearly indicates that *past collective security arrangements failed largely because of their exclusionary features* and, to remedy such shortcomings, new approaches may well be required.

This Note focuses on how to interpret the emerging environment and how to identify foreign policy and defense initiatives for furthering U.S. interests. The research is part of the project "Improving the Regional Security Environment in the Gulf," which is sponsored by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

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SUMMARY

Past Middle East security systems failed to provide regional states the minimum stability needed to prosper in peace. Although the League of Arab States (LAS) came close to achieving many of its stated goals, convoluted Arab politics since World War II denied it the ability to successfully resolve inter-Arab and regional conflicts. Conflicting political ambitions, as well as Arab regimes' age-old quest to resolve disputes through personal accommodation, were two chief reasons that the League was prevented from accomplishing its security obligations. Other regional systems, including the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC), all failed to ensure real security because they lacked both the military power to deter aggressive neighbors as well as the ideological support to ward off internal opposition. Consequently, the opportunity to effectively resolve regional security concerns whenever they arose escaped regimes entrenched in Byzantine political machinations.

Although the League was not modeled after the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), CENTO, and to lesser degree the GCC, were modeled after their West European counterpart. Not surprisingly, and throughout the Middle East, both CENTO and the GCC were perceived as organizations aimed at preserving primarily Western interests—routinely identified at the height of the Cold War as an attempt to deny the Soviet Union access to the Persian Gulf and ensure the unimpeded flow of oil to industrialized countries. It was further posited that these interests ran counter to Arab ones.

The record indicates that these Arab perceptions were largely accurate. In recent years, the GCC in particular was perceived as a rich man's club, whose sole aim was to ensure that six conservative monarchies stayed in power precisely to facilitate, even guarantee, access to petroleum resources. Among many Middle Easterners, the perception was considerably strengthened during the 1991 War for Kuwait because GCC states could not deter and defeat Iraq without outside assistance. It was only with massive Western military help, many observed, that GCC rulers could successfully eject Iraq from occupied Kuwait and return one of their own to the throne. The implication was clear: GCC governments were incapable of achieving regional security by themselves. Similarly, the ACC, which was established at Iraq's own behest, failed to avoid regional polarization and war. But unlike the GCC, the ACC failed because Saddam Hussein could not co-opt Egypt and, to lesser extents, Jordan and Yemen, to acknowledge his hegemony over the region.

This Note identifies three key weaknesses in past Middle East security systems and recommends that the United States take into account internal political considerations in helping forge future endeavors.

WEAKNESSES

Observed weaknesses include the following:

* No system was comprehensive in scope or substance. In every case,[1] several key countries were intentionally left out which, not unexpectedly, led them to oppose the particular organization.

* Every system boasted that it could deter aggression but, lacking the military might, could not deliver. Although intentions were to deter potential acts of aggression, the real objectives were political. CENTO, for example, aimed to deter the Soviet Union from intervening militarily but, more important, also wished to stop the spread of communism in the Middle East. Similarly, the GCC aimed to deter Iran from exporting its nascent revolution but, as was the case in the 1981 Bahrain coup attempt, the conservative monarchs could do little in terms of real deterrence. Agendas were thus unrealistically extended.

* Every system polarized the Middle East. Because competing forces were pitted against each other, Middle Eastern security organizations were in a state of chronic crisis. The LAS, for example, aimed to unify the vast Arab world but neglected all along the variety of polarizing forces operating within it. Although itself a product of polarization, the LAS adopted nevertheless grandiose schemes of unity, which could not be easily achieved. Rather than address intrinisic nation-building requirements, league members launched into region-wide political races, often conspiring against one another. Regional security turned into a favorite football for regimes lacking in legitimacy. Structured differently, in particular to address internal political, economic, and social needs, the LAS accomplished far more in these fields than it is generally believed. Likewise, the GCC wanted to shield itself from Iran's revolutionary zeal as well as provide security in the Persian Gulf.

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[1]Even in the case of the LAS, regional powers, as well as stateless peoples, were left out. In the post-World War II environment, Turkey, Greece, and Iran, especially, perceived the LAS as a potentially formidable force in the Middle East capable of enhancing "Arab" interests at their own expense.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Any future regional security system must be comprehensive to avoid polarization. If avoiding polarization is difficult, it is desirable that indigenous forces be capable of effectively deterring acts of aggression *without overt outside assistance*. Although this recommendation may be impossible to achieve in the short term, its intrinsic merits rest on the abilities of strong regimes to defend themselves. This could have been achieved before the War for Kuwait if GCC states were militarily stronger or Iraq weaker so that Iraq would have been deterred. Of course, GCC states were not militarily stronger than Iraq, but past shortcomings do not detract from this fundamental assertion. In fact, having suffered a military defeat, Iraq remains somewhat deterred, especially since Saudi Arabia embarked on a militarization program with the purpose of effectively defending the Arabian Peninsula against regional aggressors. Thus, although bilateral agreements can provide limited security (as, for example, between the United States and Saudi Arabia), in the long term, it is better if a determined and powerful aggressor, such as Iraq or Iran, can be checked by strong indigenous forces.

- Any future regional security organization in the Persian Gulf must address internal questions because of their intrinsic abilities to sabotage long-term stability. Moreover, regional arms control should be at the forefront of the agenda of this regional security organization. The idea is to control the flow of arms into the region or, at the very least, make aggression as expensive as possible.

- Little or no ideological differences must exist between member states to eliminate Byzantine urges to "destabilize" one's friends as well as enemies. Although ideological differences will surely exist between states, they must be minimized— perhaps by fostering economic and social cooperation—to eliminate distrust and suspicions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

THE POLITICS OF POLARIZATION

Over the past few decades, successive regimes throughout the Middle East proposed, created, and participated in regional security systems to protect themselves from regional hegemons and outside powers. The most notable cases were the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and the League of Arab States (LAS), both of which faltered because their large-scale objectives were not narrowly defined and because regimes mistrusted each other. Given the nature of the countries of the Middle East, where the state system replaced centuries of empires (Ummayad, Abbasid, and Ottoman, most notably), power was defined in terms of full authority for a narrow elite—with little or no participation for the masses—beholden to powerful global patrons. The nature of international affairs, especially the crucial economic dependencies that existed between core industrialized and periphery developing countries, was such that all Middle East countries remained indebted to those powerful forces. When a regime opted to redress perceived grievances, as was the case with Egypt in 1952 or Iran in 1953, global powers acted decisively to restore the status quo ante. It was amply clear that regional security would be defined in terms of oil-dependent industrialized countries' interests and, by extension, those of their local proxies.

The resulting polarization of the Middle East continued unabated until 1990, when Iraq invaded Kuwait. The result was the adoption of rival policies each more Machiavellian than the other. Rather than lower tensions, the League became a forum for disgruntled leaders who did not trust each other. Likewise, CENTO polarized the region further during the Cold War, when Egypt championed a nonaligned posture before turning toward Moscow. With the advent of the Iranian Revolution, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and later the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC), enlarged the gulf separating regional powers each with distinct interests, patrons, and objectives. How this polarization developed and which way it influenced the region's security environment deserve closer scrutiny.

THE COLONIAL LEGACY AND NASSER

In the aftermath of World War II and the proliferation of nation-states throughout the Middle East, six main developments influenced the region's security environment:

1. a waning of the old imperial order;
2. the awakening of Arab nationalism;

3.   the rise of Muslim fundamentalism;

4.   the establishment of Israel;

5.   the growing Soviet and American roles; and

6.   the importance of oil.[1]

Before 1955, the main objectives of the United States, Britain, and France in the Middle East were incorporated in the Tripartite Declaration of 1950, which encouraged voluntary restrictions on arms shipments to the region. Washington, London, and Paris called for the formulation of a Middle Eastern Command as well as a Middle Eastern Defense Organization (MEDO) to provide for regional security.[2] This British-sponsored American-backed scheme required strong support from the Arab world's strategic, political, cultural, educational, and popular center: Egypt. MEDO's fate was permanently sealed, however, when a group of "Free Officers" overthrew King Farouk in 1952. The new regime, lead by Colonel Muhammad Neguib—but already dominated by Captain Nasser—sought to remove foreign influences from Egypt.

Gamal Abd al-Nasser's towering figure dominated Middle East diplomacy during the 1950s and 1960s, and his influence persists to the present. Even after he passed away in 1970, his legacy—Arab nationalism—remained popular, despite the fact that it was an

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[1]It is not the purpose of this essay to be exhaustive in examining the literature in depth. The following citations are only provided for further reference. French and British colonial policies in the former Ottoman Empire failed to take root, especially because of rapid changes in Europe. The legacy of World War II, of course, limited European states' imperial ambitions, and, when confronted by Arab nationalism, France and Britain retreated leaving behind "pro-Western" governments. See Howard M. Sachar, *Europe Leaves the Middle East* (New York: Knopf, 1972). On Arab nationalism, see George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab Movement* (New York: Putnam's, 1946); movements espousing nationalist ideas emerged in Lebanon and Syria before spreading east. See Patrick Seale, *The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Arab Politics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968); and Hisham B. Shirabi, *Nationalism and Revolution in the Arab World* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1966). Although controversial, the roles played by religious groups in contemporary Arab affairs increased in frequency and importance. For two seminal works, see Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969); and Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962, 1983), especially pp. 161–221. Arabs perceived the establishment of Israel as a Western attempt to encroach on the area. The humiliating experience of defeated Arab armies, and the lot of the Palestinians, further fueled nationalist sentiments. For an analysis of the record, see Fred J. Khouri, *The Arab-Israeli Dilemma* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1976). Because both superpowers played key roles in the establishment of Israel, at the height of the Cold War, pro-Western or pro-Soviet policies were promoted by regional proxies. Security systems for the region emphasized the East-West prism with the establishment of the Baghdad Pact in 1955. See Bruce R. Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980). For an account of the importance of oil before and after World War II, see John M. Blair, *The Control of Oil* (New York: Pantheon, 1976).

[2]William Stivers, *America's Confrontation with Revolutionary Change in the Middle East, 1948–83* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), p. 12.

elusive objective. Along with successive Arab-Israeli wars and increased superpower involvements in the area, Nasser's policies polarized the Middle East. His interpretation of "Arab Unity," for example, marked the ideological debate both for his contemporaries as well as successive generations. Consequently, revolutionary Egypt's opponents and competitors attempted to contain it as best as possible, by forming anti-Nasser alliances. Perceived as a hegemon by many, Nasser was admired as well as despised, and the harder he tried to persuade Arab leaders to rise to his challenge, the more resistance he encountered. Initially nonaligned, Nasser reacted to the superpowers' increased involvement in the Middle East and, following his disappointment with Washington over Egypt's economic development needs, sought the support of the Soviet Union to counter a perceived U.S. threat to the area.

Such perceptions and counter-perceptions of threat shaped relations between struggling Arab regimes and foreign powers. Nasser's significant tilt, however, was balanced by pro-Western regimes in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the Shaykhdoms. Still, the quest for Arab regional security remained, especially in the Persian Gulf.

2. REGIONAL SECURITY IN THE PERSIAN GULF

One of the first Persian Gulf security plans was proposed by Iran in April 1974.[1] At the time, the Shah sought to lead all of the states of the Gulf (excluding Iraq) in a quest for regional dominance. Furthermore, Teheran proposed a Gulf military cooperation agreement with Saudi Arabia and the small Shaykhdoms, but Riyadh, according to Saudi Defense Minister Sultan, called rather for the establishment of security agreements within the Arab "nation."[2] Arab-Iranian relations improved considerably after the 1975 accord between Teheran and Baghdad over the *Shatt al-Arab* border dispute. But, with respect to an agreement on a Persian Gulf "security plan," no progress could be made. Iran enjoyed a quasi-military monopoly in the region and was deeply involved in Oman's Dhofar War where it deployed a battle group between 1970 and 1976.[3] In addition, despite the conservative regimes' discreet approval of Teheran's anti-People's Front for the Liberation of Oman activities, the Shah's close relations with Israel prevented the Arab Gulf states from responding to Iran's political overtures. Finally, Riyadh and its allies were also wary of the Shah's ultimate intentions, assuming that any Iranian-proposed Persian Gulf collective security scheme would tilt in Teheran's favor.[4]

The Shah's ambitious plans, as well as the sharpened interest of both superpowers in the natural resources of the region after 1974, led Arab Gulf states to seek the establishment

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[1]Anthony C. Cordesman, *The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability: Saudi Arabia, the Military Balance in the Gulf, and Trends in the Arab-Israeli Military Balance* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), pp. 395–98, 626.

[2]James H. Noyes, *The Clouded Lens: Persian Gulf Security and U.S. Policy* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1979), pp. 29–43; see also Shahram Chubin, *Security in the Persian Gulf: The Role of the Outside Powers* (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1982), pp. 145–60.

[3]Neglected by Sultan Said, Oman's Dhofar region sought to secede from Muscat starting in 1962. A civil war raged in the Sultanate throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. Dhofari "rebels" received assistance from the former Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, usually through the former People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, in their struggle against an authority that neglected the country in toto. After the 1970 coup that brought him to power, Sultan Qaboos turned to his British, Jordanian, and Iranian allies for military assistance. It was with their assistance that he finally defeated the rebels in 1975, leading him to confidently announce in November 1976 that Oman was reunited and at peace. For further details, see Howard Hensel, "Soviet Policy Towards the Rebellion in Dhofar," *Asian Affairs* 13: 2 (June 1982), pp. 183–207; and Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans* (New York: Vintage, 1975).

[4]The Shah was reported to have said: "All must realize that Iran will never be negligent on defense questions. It will obtain adequate military power to ensure the security of the region. If necessary we will do this alone. Naturally, we will be pleased if others cooperate with us in this area .... But if they do not do so, Iran will not endanger its own security .... Iran in practice has the capability of defending its just interests in this region of the world." Interview with *Al-Ahram*, republished in *Kayhan International*, June 12, 1976, in Amin Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 239.

of an "independent" security system. In March 1976, King Khalid of Saudi Arabia visited Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the UAE to propose such a plan. Iranian pressure on Gulf rulers, particularly the Al-Khalifah in Bahrain and the Al-Rashid in Dubayy, delayed any contemplated progress in achieving this goal. Sultan Qaboos of Oman considered the proposal premature and, perhaps because of his military dependence on Iran in the Dhofar War, suggested alternatively the creation of a special force capable of defending the Strait of Hormuz. Not unexpectedly, Iraqi opposition to this recommendation further delayed a resolution. Oman would reiterate the need to embark on such a venture at the fourth session of the Gulf States foreign ministers conference held in Muscat in 1976, but, as in previous attempts, no progress could be made.

Reacting to rapidly changing yet ominous developments in Iran, Iraq, Oman, and Kuwait proposed separate plans for regional security. In September 1979, Iraq offered to send troops to Bahrain and Kuwait in the event of internal uprisings or external attacks against the two Shaykhdoms. The offer was part of Baghdad's overall plan, including the creation of an Arab Deterrent Force in the Gulf. Baghdad's bold "intrusion" in Gulf affairs drew a sharp response from Muscat which proposed to its Arab Gulf neighbors a $100 million counter-plan to bolster the defense of the Strait of Hormuz. Presumably, committed funds would be used to purchase needed minesweepers and radar equipment to protect the Strait. In addition, Oman envisaged the creation of a multilateral naval force drawn from the United States, Britain, and West Germany. This international armada would "provide a presence outside the Gulf," as a supplemental force capable of guaranteeing the security of the waterway. Ironically, Iraq interpreted this proposal as a bid to create a new Western alliance to replace the ill-fated Central Treaty Organization and openly criticized its intentions. In turn, Oman denied that the Gulf states were seeking a military alliance to protect the Strait and sought to persuade conservative Arab Gulf monarchies that this Iraqi objection should not impinge on their collective efforts.

On October 16, 1979, before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War, the foreign ministers of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE opened a special conference in Taif, Saudi Arabia, where the Omani proposal for Gulf security was discussed. The consensus at the meeting was to concentrate on potential domestic uprisings and to heed Teheran's repeated calls to export its revolution to the lower Gulf. Although the Omani proposal to secure the strategic waterway was deemed important, the more critical issue was internal security, further exacerbated by the Iranian Revolution. It is this political "conceptualization" that prompted Kuwait to propose that the six

conservative states pursue a new Gulf policy capable of both limiting the influence of the Iranian Revolution and safeguarding traditional Arab Gulf interests.

Thus, from the end of World War II to the Iranian Revolution, the search for security in the Middle East was subjected to conflicting interests and to severe polarizations. With the LAS, and continuing with CENTO, the GCC and the ACC, regional leaders advanced narrow objectives even as their individual capabilities were extremely limited.

3. THE REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

What are the security records of the LAS, CENTO, the GCC, and the ACC?

THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

Established on 22 March 1945 in Cairo, the LAS originally grouped seven states: Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Trans-Jordan, and Yemen.[1] In 1991, the League's 20 members were: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Political differences aside, the original seven members agreed that the need to unify the Arab world was essential. Moreover, League members declared their solidarity with the Palestinian cause, and acknowledged a leading role for Egypt in regional affairs.[2] But mistrust and even open hostility among several members led to the adoption of a Pact that emphasized voluntary cooperation. As a result, LAS resolutions were binding only on those members who actually participated in the voting. For example, failure to attend a conference or abstaining from voting ensured no recrimination against the party in question. Stripped from this most elementary rule, LAS collective security capabilities were crippled at the outset. It is impossible to determine whether the LAS would have worked more effectively if the "veto" power was not ingrained in its working environment.

The League's purposes to work "towards the common good of all the Arab countries, the improvement of their status, the security of their future, [and] the realization of their aspirations and hopes" were to provide economic, social, and political benefits.[3] While considerable progress was recorded in economic and social affairs,[4] and while the 1945 Pact embodied a guarantee "to safeguard [the] independence and sovereignty" of each member, little political progress was ever accomplished. Furthermore, the original pact did not include collective security or mutual defense articles, even though Article 5 prohibited

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[1]The standard work on the history of the organization is Robert D. MacDonald, *The League of Arab States* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1965). For a more recent work listing the organization's achievements, see *Jami'at al-Dual al-'Arabiyah: Mithaquha wa injizatuha* [League of Arab States: Its Charter and Achievements] (Cairo: LAS, 1978). For an overview of inter-Arab politics which led to the formation of the League of Arab States, see Ahmed M. Gomaa, *The Foundation of the League of Arab States: Wartime Diplomacy and Inter-Arab Politics, 1941–1945* (London: Longman, 1977).

[2]Gomaa, *op. cit.*, p. ix.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 241.

[4]See the important contributions of Yusif A. Sayigh, *The Economies of the Arab World: Development Since 1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978).

member states from using force to settle disputes.[5] Still, in October 1949, the League "adopted the principle of collective security" targeted at defending the Arab states from Israel, with a formal Joint Defense Pact added in April 1950.[6]

In the Persian Gulf, the LAS has had limited influence, since most of the lower Gulf states did not attain their independence from the United Kingdom until 1971. In addition, the historic Saudi-Iraqi rivalry seriously hampered any progress in the political field as both states jockeyed to gain the support of the Amirs in the lower Gulf. Finally, League activity had to take into account non-Arab states' interests in the resources of the region. As such, Teheran, London, Washington, Ankara, Islamabad, and Moscow, among others, had and continue to have interests—often incompatible with those of the League—in the area.

Arguably, LAS's nonpolitical achievements could be considered technical successes. Based on its record, however, the LAS failed as a vehicle of Arab unity. Except for the Kuwait-Iraq confrontation of 1961–63—which ended after the deployment of a League peacekeeping force—and the creation of an Arab Deterrent Force deployed in Lebanon since 1976, the LAS has played no role in regional security.

The 1961–63 Kuwait crisis is an interesting example of LAS attempts to resolve inter-Arab disputes. On 19 June 1961, Kuwait proclaimed its independence from Britain. In response, General Abd al-Karim Qasim, in a message to Shaykh Abdallah al-Salim Al-Sabah, congratulated the Amir for abrogating the 1899 Anglo-Kuwaiti security agreement, but failed to recognize Kuwait as an independent Arab state. Instead, the Iraqi foreign minister revived the old territorial claim to Kuwait when he declared:

> Foreign powers including the British Government itself recognized the sovereignty of the Ottoman State over Kuwait. The Ottoman Sultan used to appoint the Shaykh of Kuwait by a decree conferring on him the title of Qaim Maqam [Vice-Governor] and making of him a representative of the Governor of Basrah in Kuwait. Thus, the Shaykhs of Kuwait continued to derive their administrative powers from the Ottoman authorities in Basrah and affirmed their allegiance to the Ottoman Sultan until 1914.[7]

In maintaining their claim to Kuwait, Iraqi leaders threatened to use force to accomplish their objectives. For example, on 26 June 1961, Iraq strengthened its forces on the Kuwaiti border, indicating an imminent invasion to regain control of strategic northern Gulf islands. Fearing for his throne, Shaykh Abdallah al-Salim Al-Sabah called on his allies

[5]MacDonald, *op. cit.*, pp. 224 and 321.

[6]*Ibid.*, p. 226.

[7]The Republic of Iraq, *The Truth About Iraq* (Baghdad: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1961), p. 24, as cited in Hussain M. Al-Baharna, *The Arabian Gulf States: Their Legal and Political Status and Their International Problems* (Beirut: Librairie Du Liban, 1975), p. 250.

to assist him in defending the Amirate. Reaction from the Arab world was overwhelmingly pro-Kuwaiti. Egypt's Nasser, politically at odds with Qasim, publicly expressed support to the Al-Sabah, and Saudi Arabia sent troops to Kuwait to help the latter seal its borders with Iraq. On 21 June 1961, Riyadh declared that "everything affecting Kuwait also affect[ed] Saudi Arabia, as they we[re] one and the same country."[8]

The Arab and international support for Kuwait impressed the Iraqis, persuading them to reassess their pressure against Kuwait. Yet, despite Iraqi declarations attempting to defuse the tension, Shaykh Al-Sabah requested military assistance from London within the framework of a Kuwaiti-British defense agreement. On 29 June, Britain ordered its aircraft carrier, the *Victorious*, and other warships in various locations in the Middle East and Africa, to Kuwait. Within two weeks, 5,000 British marines and sailors were ashore, to support the Al-Sabah. This military presence persuaded Baghdad to move cautiously. On 8 July, Qasim declared that Iraq never intended to invade Kuwait. Nevertheless, he refused to renounce Iraqi claims to the Shaykhdom and, as the crisis subsided, Britain withdrew its forces to appease rising anti-colonial Arab sentiments.[9] When Kuwait was admitted into the League of Arab States on 20 July 1961, British forces were replaced by a 3,300 man LAS peacekeeping force drawn from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Republic, Sudan, Jordan, and Tunisia. A Saudi officer, Major-General Abdallah al-Isa, commanded the peacekeeping force highlighting a new and re-invigorated Saudi interest in Gulf affairs.[10] While Iraqi territorial claims were temporarily shelved, Saudi political and military interests grew.

The 1976 Lebanon peacekeeping operation was equally problematic since it "legitimized" Syria's military presence in that beleaguered country.[11] Intended as an Arab Deterrent Force (ADF), and coming on the heels of a special Taif meeting between Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Morocco, the LAS affixed its imprimatur on the large Syrian military deployment. Small Saudi, Sudanese, Egyptian, Moroccan, and UAE contingents were deployed in and around Beirut, but left a few months later when Syria imposed its dictat. The ADF was technically under the command of the Lebanese President but, in

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[8]H.V. F. Winstone and Zahra Freeth, *Kuwait: Prospect and Reality* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1972), p. 215.

[9]Charles W. Koburger, Jr., "The Kuwait Confrontation of 1961," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* 100:1 (January 1974), pp. 42–49.

[10]MacDonald, *op.cit.* pp. 234–40.

[11]The League established a peacekeeping force in the aftermath of the 1975 Lebanese Civil War where Syria played, and continues to play, a vital role. Initially Damascus supported Muslim forces but, when Christian forces were on the brink of defeat, switched allegiances in favor of the latter. The logic centered around a Syrian fear of seeing a "radical" regime in Beirut which would catapult the Levant into an independent orbit. For further details, see Helena Cobban, *The Making of Modern Lebanon* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), especially pp. 124–79.

practicality, fell under Syria's control. Ironically, the LAS abdicated its crucial peacekeeping role in this instance, even if it maintained a semblance of legality by turning over the Lebanon file to Damascus. Unlike the 1961–63 Kuwait crisis, the LAS essentially gave up on Lebanon because of Syria's veto power. Moreover, Damascus persuasively argued that the Lebanese civil wars affected it more than any other member, and that its responsibilities needed to be commensurate to its perceived threats.

Technically, the LAS Joint Defense Council was—and still is—mandated to coordinate overall Arab defense policy. In reality, little or no military cooperation at the League level has been noted since the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war, and, in the aftermath of the 2 August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the League was further polarized.

THE CENTRAL TREATY ORGANIZATION

Because of the polarization that the Arab world experienced throughout the 1970s and 1980s, it was easy prey for outside interference. Even at the height of the Cold War, shaky governments were all too eager to enter into regional security alliances, as best exemplified by CENTO.

On 24 February 1955, Iraq and Turkey signed a bilateral treaty of mutual cooperation establishing the Baghdad Pact.[12] Baghdad and Ankara invited regional states to join them in fostering peace and security in the Middle East and Persian Gulf regions. Invitations were extended to LAS members as well as "others" concerned with security issues throughout the Middle East. Britain, Iran, and Pakistan joined the Pact the same year and a permanent secretariat was established in Baghdad.

The Pact, linking medium size powers, was initiated by Washington to protect the "Northern Tier" from potential Soviet danger.[13] Despite the U.S. absence, in part because Washington did not want to jeopardize its delicate and rapidly declining influence in Egypt, the Baghdad Pact at least enjoyed British membership. London's participation reinforced the Pact's stated goal of denying the Soviet Union any political or military penetration in the area. Although Britain's power was waning around the world, in the Middle East London still exercised a great deal of influence. But, in the aftermath of the 14 July 1958 coup in Baghdad—which brought to power Abd Al-Karim Qasim—the Pact folded. As R.K. Ramazani has observed, "the Shah of Iran was terribly shaken, fearing a similar fate for himself," and urged Washington to join when Qasim, an officer committed to rapid change

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[12]For the text of the Baghdad Pact, see Ralph H. Magnus (ed.), *Documents on the Middle East* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1969), pp. 81–83.

[13]Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *The Northern Tier: Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1966), pp. 113–31.

and revolution on broadly Nasserist lines, suspended Iraq's membership.[14] Although a member of the Pact's committees and functional groups, the United States did not formally join the organization. It did, however, sign "three bilateral agreements on March 5, 1959, with Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan, respectively, under the terms of which it promised these countries the use of American armed forces in case of aggression."[15] In response, Qasim formally denounced the Pact, precipitating the relocation of its headquarters to Ankara where, on 19 August 1959, the remaining members changed the organization's name to the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).

CENTO was redefined as a conventional military alliance in the Cold War climate of the 1950s, and served as the central link in the chain of strategic defense pacts against the Soviet Union and its allies, established by the Western powers from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO). Although the fear of communist expansion in the Northern Tier region was very real, it was unlikely that Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Pakistan would have come together on their own initiative without British and American assurances. London in particular considered CENTO to be "vital" to its security and ardently hoped that other states would join in due time. Nevertheless, for the British, a Middle East security system required the participation of Arab states, especially Egypt, to give it viability. Without the participation of nationalist Arabs, London posited, a defense pact associated with the West could not remain stable.[16]

Despite repeated Iranian appeals, Washington refused full membership, preferring to hold to its associate member status. Presumably, the U.S.'s chief reason was to remain true to its bilateral defense obligations. Under the terms of the Eisenhower Doctrine, the United States was already committed to the defense of Middle Eastern states if they were threatened by "armed aggression from any country controlled by international communism."[17] Still, Washington provided military and economic aid to both Turkey and Iran, above and beyond any CENTO requirements.

CENTO Middle East members had hoped to use the organization as a vehicle to enhance their security against regional threats, but also realized that their only effective security against the USSR required the cooperation of other powers, including the United States and the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, and much like the LAS, CENTO remained paralyzed in dealing with regional conflicts. For CENTO, the moments of truth came in 1965

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[14]*Ibid.*, p. 119.

[15]*Ibid.*

[16]Guy Hadley, *CENTO: The Forgotten Alliance* (Sussex, UK: University of Sussex Institute for the Study of International Organization, 1971), pp. 3–4.

[17]For the text of the Eisenhower Doctrine, see Magnus, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

and 1970, during the Indo-Pakistani wars. In both instances, CENTO failed to achieve peaceful resolutions when the United Kingdom and United States opted for neutrality.

CENTO experienced a "physical" loss when Britain withdrew from the Persian Gulf in 1971. Following this withdrawal, Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi sought to use CENTO as an instrument of Iranian foreign policy.[18] Preoccupied in Southeast Asia, Washington heightened its reliance on Iran and laid the foundations of its twin-pillar policy at a 1971 CENTO Ankara Ministerial Council meeting when Secretary of State William Rogers declared:

> We believe that it is proper that, following the British action [to withdraw from the Persian Gulf], the states of the region should exercise primary responsibility for security in the Gulf as the distinguished Foreign Minister of Iran has pointed out.[19]

Throughout the seventies, Iran came to embody CENTO's search for regional security, even if no Arab Gulf state fully accepted Teheran's dictat. Conservative Arab monarchs in the Persian Gulf tolerated Teheran's military hegemony but refused to translate their reluctant acquiescence into a political victory for the Shah.

Because of its pro-Western leanings, CENTO caused serious disturbances throughout the Middle East. Outside the organization, Arab leaders hoping for a neutral bloc between the communist world and the West were bitterly opposed to the organization. But even inside the organization, long-term regional interests persuaded Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan to operate more independently from Britain and the United States. In July 1964, these three countries established the Organization for Regional Cooperation and Development (ORCD) to satisfy their own nascent concerns.

The last CENTO Ministerial Council meeting was held in 1978 in London. By the fall of 1978 premonitions of revolution led Teheran to scale back its participation, and in 1979, after the fall of the Shah, the government of the Islamic Republic cancelled its membership in CENTO (27 March 1979). Thereby the organization lost its central link and consequently its raison d'etre. With the subsequent withdrawal of Turkey and Pakistan in the same year, the organization was dissolved formally.

Despite its significant achievements, notably the development of Iran's potent military capacity, CENTO failed to guarantee regional security for the following principal reasons:

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[18] Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy 1941–1973: A Study of Foreign Policy in Modernizing Nations* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1975), pp. 355–59.

[19] "Statement Before CENTO Ministerial Meeting, April 30," *U.S. Department of State Bulletin* 44 (May 31, 1971), p. 652.

- Against the rise of Arab nationalism—with which all Arab Gulf states identified—CENTO was perceived as too closely allied with the West. Under these "ideological" conditions, few die-hard supporters rallied to salvage the organization.

- CENTO was closely identified with Iran throughout the 1970s. Consequently, the organization could no longer secure regional stability, because Arab Gulf states developed their own distinct views of regional stability.

THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL

The Iranian Revolution was the catalyst and the Iran-Iraq War the rationale that convinced the six conservative Arab Gulf states to set up a regional security organization without the participation of the two northern Gulf states. Whereas before November 1980 most Gulf rulers argued that the Gulf region represented the strategic depth for the Arab world facing Israel, developments in Iran and Iraq transformed the confrontation states into the strategic depth of the Gulf countries vis-à-vis Iran. Barriers, both physical and ideological, which isolated the Gulf states from past Arab-Israeli wars, were no longer as pressing in the Gulf region. Iran and Iraq were too close for comfort and both revolutionary regimes—the Islamic and the Baathist—loomed more ominous for the GCC states than the ideological dimensions of the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation. Political and military changes in the Persian Gulf strengthened the perceptions of Arab Gulf rulers that the Iranian Revolution was a tangible threat to their political survival. In fact, Arab Gulf rulers were forced to come out of their shells and shoulder the responsibility of collectively providing security in the Persian Gulf region. As one analyst posited, "to understand the tremendous change that swept through the Gulf countries, one must realize that a clearer comprehension of the fundamentals of international power plays has become fixed in the minds of Gulf rulers. In consequence of their efforts and commitments towards the non-oil Arab countries, the Gulf producers' intentions must be given very serious weights."[20]

Having weighed the consequences of past failures in coordinating security efforts to the fullest, the establishment of the GCC in 1981 was meant to amalgamate perceptions of threats to the six member states, as well as assess joint defensive capabilities.[21] Moreover,

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[20]Marwan Iskandar, "A New Approach to Gulf Security," *An-Nahar Arab Report and Memo* 5:7 (February 16, 1981), p. 1.

[21]Yahya Halmi Rajab, *Majlis al-Taawun li-Dual al-Khalij al-Arabiyah: Ruyat Mustaqbaliat; Dirasat Qanuniyah, Siyasiyah, Iqtisadiyah* [The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf: Future Developments; a legal, political, and economic study] (Riyadh: n.p., 1983); Emile A. Nakhleh, *The Gulf Cooperation Council: Politics, Problems and Prospects* (New York: Praeger, 1986); Erik R. Peterson, *The Gulf Cooperation Council: Search for Unity in a Dynamic Region* (Boulder: Westview

one of the key goals of the organization was the identification of common political interests, which made GCC states both compatible and unique in the Arab world. Although previous regional security organizations failed to hold, the primary reason for past failures was the incompatibility among proposed partners. Both Iran and Iraq stood, and to a certain extent stand, as dominant powers when contrasted with the smaller Arabian Peninsula states, including Saudi Arabia. It was only in the past decade that Saudi Arabia acquired tangible strengths, both economic and military, capable of deterring potential aggressors. Moreover, it was only in the mid-1980s that the small Gulf Shaykhdoms and Oman reluctantly accepted Riyadh's security shield.

For the GCC, some successes have already been accomplished in the economic and military fields. But when Iraq threatened to invade, and on 2 August 1990, launched a massive attack on Kuwait, the GCC failed to deter and repulse a regional power. Within a matter of days, GCC states called on their Western allies to rush to their assistance, further illustrating the weakness of the alliance. It certainly held together, but just was not strong enough to deter Iraq, or to repulse Baghdad without massive Western military aid. Precisely because it was an alliance against Iran and Iraq, the GCC's chief limitation was its incapacity, as well as unwillingness, to field a credible deterrent force.[22] Were it established as a collective security system encompassing all regional states, its intrinsic abilities to deal with aggression may have led to different results.

THE ARAB COOPERATION COUNCIL

Although the GCC alliance excluded Iran and Iraq from its membership roster, the conservative monarchies went out of their way to persuade Teheran and Baghdad that their efforts were not aimed at containing the two regional revolutionary powers. Rather, GCC states argued that they could not welcome either state while the Iran-Iraq War was in progress. Few believed them. Granted that GCC states did not pose a military threat to their neighbors, still Iran and Iraq were keenly aware of Western support to the monarchies. The War for Kuwait, of course, substantiated this concern.

Since 1981, the GCC alliance slowly carved a separate agenda within the Arab world, focusing exclusively on its Gulf concerns. GCC states, for example, forced a landmark

Press, 1988); and R. K. Ramazani, *The Gulf Cooperation Council: Record and Analysis* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988).

[22]The blame does not fall on the GCC alone. Given the military power that Iraq had accumulated over the past ten years, there was virtually nothing the GCC could have done on its own to defend Kuwait against a determined Iraqi invasion. The ability of the GCC to defend Kuwait might have been quite different had Iraqi military power been at a level consistent with Iraq's legitimate defense needs.

resolution at the 1987 LAS Amman Summit condemning Iran. Remarkably, the resolution did not even address the Palestinian Question which led, a few months later, to the *Intifadah* on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.[23] The implication was clear: GCC states were more concerned with Gulf issues than Arab ones. Iraq's response to this latest polarization was to seek alternative partners to counter the rising GCC/Western influence in the Persian Gulf region.

On 16 February 1989, six months after the August 1988 Iran-Iraq War cease-fire, Baghdad hosted Egypt's President Husni Mubarak, Jordan's King Hussein, and the Yemen Arab Republic's President Ali Abdallah Salih. The four heads of state agreed to establish the Arab Cooperation Council[24] and, over the course of the following year, opened their airspaces to each other's aircraft (thereby treating air travel among them as domestic flights), improved economic ties, and encouraged investments in member-states. Between February 1989 and August 1990, ACC heads of state gathered on four different occasions (February, June, and September 1989, as well as February 1990), when important political and economic decisions were reached.

ACC founders took note of the GCC's achievements as the very similarity in their names indicated. Indeed, ACC founders considered the successful integration of the European Economic Community, and the challenges this posed them. To be sure, the

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[23]Although difficult to substantiate, there may well have been a linkage between the Amman Summit and the beginning of the *Intifadah*. Indeed, it was within a few weeks of the summit that the outbreak of a sustained general uprising among the Arab population of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip started. To be sure, the summit communique reiterated the usual fare concerning the Palestinian question. But compared to specific measures called to address the perceived Iranian threat, the absence of any steps dealing with the core Arab-Israeli issue was blatantly noticeable. See Daniel C. Diller (ed.), *The Middle East* (7th edition) (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1989), pp. 37–38, 307–08.

[24]Established on 16 February 1989, the ACC Heads of States appointed Dr. Hilmi Nammar as Secretary-General on 14 June 1989. A similar unifying effort was initiated in North Africa when, on 18 February 1989, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania, and Morocco established the Arab Maghrib Union (AMU). By most accounts, its strengths seem to be more economic than political, given active human contacts with Europe. In fact, the AMU's primary objective is to tackle the region's whopping unemployment rates (hovering around 15 percent in Tunisia, 25 percent in Algeria, and 40 percent in Morocco in 1989) and, more important, to address an increasing population rate. Estimated at 60 million individuals in 1989, the region's population is expected to grow to 100 million in the year 2000, with over 50 percent under the age of 20. Maghribi leaders are of course very much "convinced that regional blocs are becoming the only viable paradigm of economic survival" and, consequently, aim to amalgamate their economic ties. For further details see, Oussama Romdhani, "The Arab Maghreb Union: Toward North African Integration," *American-Arab Affairs*, Number 28 (Spring 1989), pp. 42–48; and Mary-Jane Deeb, "The Arab Maghrib Union in the Context of Regional and International Politics," *Middle East Insight* 6:5 (Spring 1989), pp. 42–46. Colonel Muammar al-Qadhdhafi threatened to pull out of the AMU in mid-May 1992, allegedly insisting that member-states ought to break the UN embargo imposed against Libya. See "Libya Reportedly Threatens To Withdraw from UMA," *Al-Bayane* (Casablanca), 16 May 1992, p. 1.

gradual and pragmatic process of European unity sought to culminate with the emergence of the largest integrated economic bloc in the world. This development was viewed with concern since an integrated Europe translated into tangible repercussions on dependent economies. The ACC founding agreement referred to the "useful lesson (learned) from the positive and negative aspects of (several) experiments." The word "practical" was frequently cited: "practical ties," "practical cooperation," "practical and realistic means," and "practical measures." Most of the emphasis was on achieving coordination and cooperation "gradually" and "according to (existing) circumstances, capabilities and experiences." Furthermore, in coordinating production policies, the ACC aimed to "take into consideration the different levels of growth" of its member states. In short, the ACC was keenly aware of the daunting challenges to success, but, in the zeal of at least the Iraqi leadership, failed to heed its own advice. Rather, it embarked on grandiose integration plans that could not be implemented as long as Baghdad was devoting a substantial portion of its GNP to the military.

Supporters of the ACC believed that the charter's cautionary approach preserved its integrity as well as those of its member-states, maintaining that unlike the example of the Arab League, "the ACC agreement could be said to be just one step ahead of the GCC charter" as it did not threaten paralysis.[25] The ACC agreement stipulated that "member states shall strive to achieve unanimity"; but unlike the GCC, it contemplated the possibility that key decisions may have to be reached by simple majority vote. Like the GCC, however, the ACC was also aware of the larger Arab dimension and underlined the adherence of its members "to the Arab League charter, the Treaty of Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation, and the institutions and organizations stemming from the Arab League." Still, given its memberships—both Egypt and Iraq having harbored hegemonic tendencies throughout the region and with Yemen rekindling the dormant Saudi-Yemeni confrontation—it was to be expected that the ACC would be perceived as an axis against the GCC. No matter how many persuasive statements were issued by the ACC, nor the many public statements made by the four heads of state to assuage enlightened critics, few believed them. In hindsight, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's declaration that no ACC country had an "irresponsible stand toward an Arab or non-Arab state" speaks volumes. The assertion that Saddam Hussein "totally involved as he [wa]s in the mammoth task of reconstruction,

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[25]Unlike the LAS, ACC decisions were to be reached by consensus, without any member having a veto power. See Mohammed Wahby, "The Arab Cooperation Council and the Arab Political Order," *American-Arab Affairs*, Number 28 (Spring 1989), pp. 60–67.

[and, consequently wa]s not likely to impose Iraq's leadership on any of his neighbors,"[26] was equally revelatory.

Heralded as a complementary effort to the LAS, the ACC unfortunately fell into a polarizing trap, much like the GCC before it. Whereas conservative monarchies identified, preserved, and protected narrow Gulf interests, the ACC became Iraq's forum to identify, preserve, and protect Baghdad's narrower conception of Arab interests. Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen acknowledged this negative attribute but, pressed on the economic front, chose to ignore Baghdad's increasingly belligerent posturings. Iraq, it was reasoned, was a non-negligible economic power capable of channeling much needed funds into the Egyptian, Jordanian, and Yemeni economies. Ironically, during the War for Kuwait, only Jordan and Yemen stood by Iraq in defending "Arab" interests. Egypt's rejection of Saddam Hussein illustrated that Cairo was only interested in the ACC's economic input but rejected any and all of the organization's ideological rationale. Organized to enhance Iraq's political niche in the Arab world, the ACC collapsed shortly after President Husni Mubarak rejected Saddam Hussein's calls for Arab solidarity against GCC states and the latter's Western allies.[27]

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[26]*Ibid.*, p. 63.

[27]In early 1992, the ACC Headquarters in Amman, Jordan, was disposing of "excess" furniture. Given the polarization of the Middle East in the aftermath of the War for Kuwait, it may indeed be difficult to anticipate a political rapprochement between Iraq and Egypt over the next few years.

4. SECURITY REQUIREMENTS IN THE 1990s

In recent decades, the Persian Gulf region passed through the British security stage (which ended with London's withdrawal from the area in 1971), the "power vacuum" period (1971–1979—when both Iran and Saudi Arabia maintained the semblance of a twin pillar policy), and the Iranian Revolution era (which experienced two major wars). Thus, throughout the 1980s security meant containing, first the Iranian Revolution, second the Iran-Iraq War and its consequences, and third the Soviet Union after the latter's invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. Throughout the decade, Gulf security also meant securing the free flow of oil, especially for the industrialized countries. Many of the assumptions held during this period were upset by the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Today, Gulf security means upholding the political map in the area as it was before August 1990, preventing mutual aggression between regional states, formulating an accepted, even if ill-defined, balance of power, and in the end, securing the free and secure flow of oil.

As a byproduct of the War for Kuwait, the GCC states concocted a new alliance with both Egypt and Syria, ubiquitously known as the GCC+2. Washington supported the Damascus Eight (as the agreement was reached in the Syrian capital) and, at least for a while, the stigma attached to openly cooperating with the United States was somewhat eased. With Cairo and Damascus on board, GCC states could assume that the worst was behind them. Moreover, there was little doubt that Arab forces were now willing to fight alongside Western contingents. But in the aftermath of the war, both Egypt and Syria expressed reservations regarding the pace with which GCC states would implement the terms of their newly signed agreement. Iran for its part was equally vocal in leveling its own criticisms. Riyadh ignored Damascus but could hardly dismiss Cairo and Teheran. In time, sharp differences would indeed emerge within the GCC+2 alliance. What were these perspectives and how did they differ from those of the GCC states?

THE EGYPTIAN PERCEPTION

Cairo perceived Gulf security as being intrinsically linked to Arab security. Moreover, Egyptians maintained that there was a strong, almost organic, relationship between the Gulf region and Egypt itself. Like his two predecessors since the 1952 Revolution, Husni Mubarak and the entire Egyptian leadership believe that security in the "Persian Gulf" is, first and foremost, an Arab concern. To drive the point home, Mubarak did not hesitate in joining the GCC+2 proposal, when it was first recommended by the United States. Still,

Cairo supported the GCC+2 proposal while insisting that it should fall under the auspices of the LAS. If no regional agreement could be reached, Mubarak explained, Egypt would then welcome bilateral initiatives. Unlike GCC countries, however, Cairo categorically rejected the participation of non-Arab parties. For Egypt, Gulf security included the following:

- First, a withdrawal of all foreign forces from the region.
- Second, a rejection of any redrawing of Iraq's borders. Just as it supported the territorial integrity of Kuwait, Cairo maintained that no changes should be introduced in the Iraqi case. In light of recent UN recommendations to re-draw the Kuwait-Iraq border in the former's favor, this could prove a major stumbling block for future GCC-Egyptian ties.
- Third, opposition to Turkish, Pakistani, and Iranian interference in inter-Arab affairs. Cairo posited that Arabs were best equipped to deal with Gulf security matters.

But given these positions, and since it was assumed that Egyptian troops would play a major role in the GCC+2 arrangement, why did Cairo fail to get its say? At least two reasons emerged.

- First, Egypt recognized the unique role that Iran played in the Gulf region, despite Cairo's vocal reservations. Although a limited Iranian political role was acceptable, under no circumstances would Egypt accept an Iranian military deployment on the Arabian Peninsula.
- Second, Egypt also believed that Saddam Hussein's successor must be contained. Cairo argued that Iraq was too important to write off and that it must be incorporated in any sound balance of power arrangement in the region. Failing to include Iraq in such a scheme ensured that revenge would stay on the mind of this and successor regimes. But, given the fact that Baghdad would probably not be incorporated in any immediate regional security arrangement, this did not augur well for conservative Arab Gulf monarchies. The logic in this instance, of course, was based on the German experience in the aftermath of World War I.

In addition to these issues, Cairo's lukewarm relationship with GCC states was also the result of the latter's grave concerns that the presence of Egyptian troops in close

proximity to theirs—as opposed to serving side by side, under an American command, during Desert Storm—would gel military cadres and, perhaps, radicalize them. Few in the Gulf forgot that President Sadat's assassin was serving in the Egyptian Army and, perhaps more important, maintained very close contacts with Muslim "fundamentalist" forces. Since it is assumed that such sympathy is widespread in the Egyptian army, it should come as no surprise that GCC leaders fear such associations. Better to irritate Husni Mubarak than risk loosening their hold on their military establishments. Other GCC concerns included the high cost of maintaining 2 full Egyptian army corps (around 50,000 men) in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait as well as contemplating the possibility of placing GCC forces under Egyptian command. Cairo repeatedly argued that its military experience was far superior to anything that any GCC state, including Saudi Arabia, could field and, therefore, must be in charge of any military organization created within the GCC+2 plan. This position was a non-starter for an energized and increasingly assertive Saudi Arabia which voiced its reservations about the whole idea. By mid-1992, an ossified GCC+2 proposal failed to garner support, save in the most optimistic circles.

THE IRANIAN PERCEPTION

Clearly the major winner in the War for Kuwait, Iran stood to gain a whole lot more clout in the region for the balance of the century and beyond. It even was in a position to dictate terms of any future Gulf security plans.

In speeches, interviews, and comments made to foreign visitors, Iranian leaders advanced their own views on a future Gulf security arrangement and the potential role for Iran in it. From much of this discourse, Iran's own priorities, preferences, and preconditions were discernible. Teheran posited that the GCC+2 plan was unworkable:

- First, under its current composition it excluded the most important regional state (Iran), without which there "can be no real, effective and long-lasting peace in the region." Moreover, Iranian leaders did not foresee Arab states forming a genuine security umbrella when no decisive threat existed now that Iraq was checked. (This particular reasoning conveniently skirted the threat that Iran, in the eyes of Arab regimes and masses, posed to the Arab world.)

- Second, Iran further considered the GCC+2 arrangement to be flawed because it involved outside powers, especially the United States. Even if President Rafsanjani's regime could clearly live with a short-term American

presence so close to Iranian shores, Iran remained uncertain as to the real purpose of the GCC+2 plan. If the plan aimed to create a Saudi hegemonic power in the area, it reasoned, then Iran would simply oppose it. To articulate its opposition, Teheran could support the smaller Shaykhdoms, many of whom remain wary of the Saudi rise amongst their midst. If, on the other hand, Iran concluded that the GCC+2 scheme would not result in the establishment of Saudi hegemony, then it may offer to join it, perhaps as an observer, in order not to offend "Arab" sensitivities.

- Finally, Iran's own preference for Gulf security was to replace the GCC+2 scheme (even if its Syrian ally played a significant role within it) with a GCC+ Iran (or GCC+1) proposal, which would bring the conservative Arab Gulf monarchies under its tutelage. But since GCC states were unlikely to accept such an invitation in the forseeable future, Iran's potential participation in any Gulf security arrangement remained problematic.

Ironically, without Iran, GCC states cannot achieve their long-sought objective. With it, they fear for their political survival. It is in large measure to check this Iranian factor, and in the absence of an effective alliance with Egypt and Syria, that GCC states may try to woo Iraq back into their fold, as quickly as possible after the Baath regime is replaced in Baghdad.

5. THE FAILURES OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY IN THE ARAB WORLD: SOME PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

Alliances to ensure security in the Middle East have fared poorly in the past. The difficulty in providing a satisfactory security umbrella has been due principally to the fractionation of interests among Arab states and their nonrepresentative governments.

In spite of the "Arab Unity" slogan, each state in the region has its own political agenda. Several of the larger states are rivals for the leadership role in the Arab world. About the only consideration that truly unites them is their opposition to Israel and its regional policies and goals. Otherwise, each state, particularly the major ones, strives to maintain its importance by forming alliances and by other means to influence events. Consequently, it is difficult to get all or even most of the countries in the region to agree on specific regional security goals and objectives. It may therefore be safe to posit that if the states of the region cannot agree on their security goals and objectives, they will find it next to impossible to agree on a security structure to protect all of their interests.

A second difficulty involves the personification of the various states' policies. While several states exhibit some democratic tendencies, no Middle Eastern state is a true Western-style democracy. This means that their policies strongly reflect the ideas and personalities of their leaders. The same characteristic might be said to be attributable to Western democracies, i.e., that their policies will reflect the views of their elected leaderships. In Western democratic governments, however, foreign policy is more of a constant than a variable. To be sure, each newly elected government will likely put its own twist on foreign policy, but the basic goals and strategies will vary slowly over time and may remain constant over a long period of time. The situation is quite different in the Middle East. Because the policies of a government are so closely tied to the individual person leading the state, when that individual changes, the government's policies are also likely to change, sometimes significantly. Of course, this characteristic is exacerbated in the Middle East, because of the abruptness of the change. Leadership changes occur almost solely through death, often violent, or by revolution. In such circumstances, the policies of the government are very apt to change radically leaving treaty obligations and other security agreements in the wake of the revolution. Several forms of regional security structures have been tried in the Middle East as discussed above. Table 5.1 summarizes their main characteristics.

Table 5.1

Recent Middle East Security Structures

Name	Membership	Type	Threat	Outside Participation	Failure
LAS	Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Palestine Liberation Organization	"Collective"	Israel	None	Veto power
Baghdad Pact	Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, UK	Pact	Soviet Union	UK (U.S.)	Revolution
CENTO	Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, UK	Pact	Soviet Union	UK (U.S.)	Revolution
GCC	Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Alliance	Iran, Iraq	None	Weak force
ACC	Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Yemen	Bloc	GCC	None	Narrow membership, no common security interests

The LAS is a collective security structure because it contains all of the major regional countries except for Iran (ignoring Israel, which is a special case). One failure is the veto power each member has over the LAS actions. Another weakness is the imbalance of forces among member states. For example, before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the number of main battle tanks in Iraq and Jordan was about equal to the number of main battle tanks possessed by all other LAS members. Even when a majority of LAS members voted against the Iraqi action, there was little that they could do to deter it, and, failing that, to overturn it. On the other hand, the record is not entirely bleak. The LAS did act successfully in an earlier Iraq-Kuwait dispute. Moreover, it is difficult to argue against a consortium of regional states trying to solve their own problems. The rub comes when it tries to solve a

problem and fails. That, obviously, has not only regional implications but also severe and direct consequences for states outside the region, e.g., the 1990 Iraq invasion of Kuwait.

Although both the Baghdad Pact and CENTO were alliances of principal states within the region, they were directed against a power outside the region, namely, the Soviet Union. It is instructive to note, however, that neither was long-lived. The first reason is that both Iraq and Iran, the former in the case of the Baghdad Pact and the latter in the case of CENTO, experienced revolutionary changes in government with corresponding changes in policy. Second, both alliances had a "Western" tilt (even agenda) and had a somewhat limited number of participants. Consequently, there was no price to pay in terms of lost opportunities to interact with other regional neighbors when a state did drop out.

If any alliance should have worked it should have been the GCC. GCC states are located in the same geographical area and have a common cause, namely, the preservation of their governments against threats outside the Arabian Peninsula. The GCC failed (or would have failed even if it had mounted a more competent defense) because its forces were no match for the Iraqis. Again, using the metric of the number of main battle tanks, Iraq outnumbered the GCC by more than 5:1 before Operation Desert Storm. It was impossible to defend Kuwait successfully with this great a force imbalance.

The ACC had the same deficiency as the GCC in that Iraq was by far the most militarily powerful member (outnumbering Egypt, the other major regional power in the alliance) by more than 2:1 in main battle tanks. Furthermore, Egypt is not close to Kuwait and the vast geographical distance poses logistical difficulties. Even if Cairo had wanted to assist Kuwait in its defense (in the absence of a UN mandated coalition force), it could not have done so in a timely manner. Although Egypt could have deployed forces to Saudi Arabia for a counterattack into Kuwait, given the odds, it is very unlikely that it would have succeeded.

All of these structures failed for one reason or another. We cannot be sure what security structure will succeed in the future, but we know the characteristics of failure in the past:

- the structure had too narrow a membership, and
- the structure had inadequate forces either to deter aggression, or, if deterrence failed, to counterattack and restore the previous boundaries.

Consequently, the necessary discernible characteristics for a Middle East security structure (with particular emphasis on the Persian Gulf) are that it contain as many regional

states as possible, and that it develop reliable procedures and capabilities for using force to keep the peace in the region. To achieve the latter objective, some semblance of a military balance across the various states must also exist. If one state, like Iraq in the past or posssibly Iran or Syria in the future, becomes too powerful, it can by itself thwart the will of the majority whose members will have little choice but to respond either individually or, when incapable of doing so, with the assistance of outside allies.